

Patent Claims

1. An apparatus in a vehicle (1) for producing and  
5 wirelessly transmitting messages to vehicles (11) which  
are set up to receive such messages, having a  
communication means (2) and activation means (3), where  
activation by the activation means (3) is used to  
transmit messages from the communication means (2)  
10 which comprise at least information about the position  
and speed of the vehicle (1),  
characterized

in that the communication means (2) is in the form of  
part of a unit (5) in the vehicle for determining road  
15 tolls, the messages being sent to the vehicles (11)  
from the communication means (2) using a control center  
(6) which is set up to manage road tolls, and the  
activation means (3) is in the form of a  
direction-of-travel indicator operating element.

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2. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1,  
characterized

in that the direction-of-travel indicator operating  
element is in the form of a hazard warning system  
25 switch and/or in the form of a direction indicator  
switch.

3. The apparatus as claimed in claim 2,  
characterized

30 in that the messages activated by the hazard warning  
system switch are used in the control center (6) to  
determine the end of a tailback and/or to detect a  
slow-moving vehicle (1) and/or to identify a  
broken-down vehicle (1).

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4. The apparatus as claimed in claim 2,  
characterized

in that the messages activated by the direction indicator switch are used in the control center (6) to detect an overtaking operation by the vehicle (1) and/or to determine the use of a vehicle park.

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5. The apparatus as claimed in one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the control center (6) contains a digital road map (7).

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6. The apparatus as claimed in one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that some or all of the vehicles (11) which are set up to receive the messages likewise comprise a unit (5) in the vehicle for determining road tolls.

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7. The apparatus as claimed in one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that received messages can be output in the vehicle (1, 11) visually, audibly and/or haptically.

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8. The apparatus as claimed in one of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that the control center (6) can actuate means (8) for outputting collective traffic information.

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9. The apparatus as claimed in one of claims 1 to 8, characterized in that the communication means (2) is a mobile telephone.

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10. The apparatus as claimed in one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that an online billing facility for sent and/or received messages is provided.

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11. A method for producing messages in a vehicle and wirelessly transmitting them to further vehicles (11)

which are set up to receive such messages, where activation by the driver of the vehicle (1) is followed by transmission of the message which comprises at least information about the position and speed of the vehicle

5 (1),

characterized

in that the message is sent automatically from a unit (5) in the vehicle for determining road tolls to a control center (6) which is set up to manage road tolls

10 after the driver of the vehicle (1) has activated a direction-of-travel indicator operating element (3), with the control center (6) forwarding a message to the vehicles (11) after said message has been received.

15 12. The method as claimed in claim 11,

characterized

in that the control center (6) forwards a message to the vehicles (11) only after at least one further message of the same type has been received.

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13. The method as claimed in claim 11 or 12,

characterized

in that provision is made for received messages to be forwarded in the control center (6).